

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS DEPARTMENT
Monthly Report for November 1946

Progress in the work of the Industrial Relations Department may be summarized for November as follows:

Department Store Program: The third downtown department store on the schedule was worked with. This store, Kresge's Newark, has now promised us to definitely hire some Negro girls as sales clerks. We are now discussing the question of upgrading several Negro girls or selecting well-qualified Negro girls from outside the store. The number of Negro girls used as cashier-wrappers (as a result of the work toward Negro sales clerks) has been increased to about 25. Some of these are temporary Christmas employees.

The League of Women Shoppers consulted the Industrial Relations Secretary about what they could do to spur the use of Negro girls as sales clerks. It was suggested that they address their attention to Kresge's, since this would conform to established strategy. The matter was put on the Agenda of the Essex County Intergroup Action Committee, which set up a sub-committee on Employment Problems to work on the department stores' situation. Mr. Norris was appointed Chairman and had called one meeting of the group before the close of November.

At this writing the Employment Problems Committee urges that every customer, or potential customer of downtown department stores do the following:

1) Write to Kresge, Newark, commending them for including some Negro girls among their cashier-wrappers; and urging them to extend this practice to the position of sales clerk. 2) Write to Hearn's and to Hahne's urging them to include some Negro girls among their sales clerks. The letter to Hahne's should be a very strong one.

Veterans Program: The Continuing Committee of the State-wide Veterans Conference, of which Mr. Norris is chairman, met again during November. The committee was also reached by mail and telephone several times, concerning the problems of getting Negro veterans who have been loud in their grievances about their inability to get apprenticeship training, to fill out official Veterans Administration blanks (sent from the New Jersey Urban League Industrial Relations office) applying for help. Many of these veterans claim they received the "brush-off" when applying in person at Veterans Administration offices. The VA, in turn, claims no record of these men applying for aid.

The Committee voted to back up the New Jersey Urban League Industrial Relations Secretary in his requests to the VA that it establish a three man Board to review cases of "entitled" veterans whose "approved" objectives are thwarted because of their race, color, creed, or national origin. (At this writing, in December, significant success has been realized at the initial point of getting VA approval of the advisability and workability of such a Board.) The Board has been agreed on, and we are now moving through proper channels for setting it up.

Building Trades Program: A stalemate in this program was moved as a result of the New Jersey (state) Building Trades Council agreeing to cooperate with the Veterans Administration by making available 2,500 apprenticeship training opportunities for qualified veterans. This was the opening wedge through which the Industrial Relations Secretary was impelled to make representations.

The Industrial Relations Secretary took an appropriate speaking engagement as an occasion for tightening up on reactions of AFofL Building Trades unions to democratic ideals. Mr. Thomas Parsonnet, City of Newark Corporation Council, was the other speaker on this particular platform, and had built up a beautiful picture of the success the AFofL has had in eliminating discrimination particularly from the building trades. The Industrial Relations Secretary corrected several mis-statements of fact given by Mr. Parsonnet: 1) That the Building Trades apprenticeship training has been made available to all qualified veterans; 2) That through the intercession of the New Jersey State Division Against Discrimination, the AFofL union at Public Service Coordinated Transport Company, had been able to change the company's discrimination against Negroes as bus drivers, etc.

The Industrial Relations Secretary commended the AFofL for efforts and progress it has actually made, but set the record straight as to apprenticeship opportunities and as the fact that the Urban League (and neither the DAD, nor the AFofL) was responsible for PSCTC's becoming impelled to change its discriminatory policy in the employment of bus drivers.

This Report is important since Mr. Parsonnet heatedly declared that "the Urban League would hear of this", would be told about one of its representatives (having the temerity) to criticize the AFofL. The consensus of the meeting was taken immediately, and it was completely obvious that the New Jersey Urban League Industrial Relations Secretary was perfectly fair and correct in his position.

Mr. Parsonnet claimed that he misunderstood the Industrial Relations Secretary and then promised to cooperate with efforts to get certain AFofL unions to cease their discrimination. He finally went on record as pledging his personal efforts to aid in Urban League objectives.

Efforts were continued on the following Programs, but without additional significant developments: Telephone Industry, Insurance Field, and the Transportation Industry.

Household Employment Program: A revision in the Standards was decided upon after several conferences. All Urban Leagues and Similar Agencies were gotten to bring up the Standards for official action. (The revision was completed on December 8th, and is now available for final action of the Boards of the New Jersey Urban League and the Newark YWCA).

Employment: The total number of job applicants was 68; referrals, 107. Female applicants 43; male applicants 21. Female referrals 42; male referrals 29. Household referrals accounted for 36 of the total of 107, and include second, third and fourth referrals of the same individual, for day work.

General Activity: Two public addresses were given, one at Downingtown, Pennsylvania, and one in New York city. Addresses to closed meetings were delivered in Irvington, Bloomfield, and Newark. Six meetings and eleven conferences were called or participated in to specifically implement the several programs of the department. Industrial Relations Consultant service was given in an electrical equipment plant. Two contacts were made with downtown offices regarding use of Negro girls as stenographers. (One firm, hired a Negro girl, the other asked for another discussion of it.)